

Cooperative Weather Observers Receive Awards

Several awards were given out this spring to some of the dedicated cooperative weather observers that serve northeast Montana. These folks are just one of nearly 11,000 volunteer stations nation wide that collect daily weather information including maximum and minimum temperatures along with daily precipitation amounts from rain and snow.

Volunteer weather observers conscientiously contribute their time so that observations can provide the vital information needed. These data are invaluable in learning more about the floods, droughts, heat and cold waves affecting us all. The data are also used in agricultural planning and assessment, engineering, environmental-impact assessment, utilities planning, and litigation. COOP data plays a critical role in efforts to recognize and evaluate the extent of human impacts on climate from local to global scales.

Observers frequently record temperature and precipitation daily and send those reports monthly to the National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) or an NWS office. Many cooperative observers provide additional hydrological or meteorological data, such as evaporation. Data is transmitted via telephone, computer or mail. Equipment used at NWS cooperative stations may be owned by the NWS, the observer, or by a company or other government agency, as long as it meets NWS equipment standards.

The first network of cooperative stations was set up as a result of an act of Congress in 1890 that established the Weather Bureau, but many COOP stations began operation long before that time. John Campanius Holm's weather records, taken without the benefit of instruments in 1644-45, were the earliest known observations in the United States. Subsequently many persons, including George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin, maintained weather records. Thomas Jefferson maintained an almost unbroken record of weather observations between 1776 and 1816, and George Washington took his last observation just a few days before he died.



Eric Albus, COOP observer for the river gage at Bjornberg Bridge on the Milk River near Saco Montana, received a 15 Year Length of Service Award



Charles and Darlene Moline located 3 miles southwest of Brockway, MT received a 20 Year Length of Service Award.



Geraldine Pennell, COOP observer at Culbertson , MT river gauge, received a 20 Year Length of Service Award.



Jerald and Bonnie Bergman were presented with a 25 Year Length of Service Award.



Eugene Meyer located in Westby, MT received a 15 Year Length of Service Award.



Darcel Wesen and Ben Martin with the Montana Aviation Research Company, located at St. Marie, MT received a 10 Year Length of Service Award.